

Food - Fun - Entertainment

FRANK TALK

by Marion Frank

After five weeks of rigid and strenuous rehearsals, the cast, crew, director and talented author C. Y. Lee of "Houseboat Named Pebbles" are quite gratified with the approval and applause of standing room audiences in the first performances of the world premiere showing at the Chapel Theatre. The story, written by Mr. Lee, who also authored "Flower Drum Song," depicts life on a houseboat, which also involves a lonely hearts club which Carl, portrayed by Kirk Dadisman, and his wife, Rita, played by Gretchen Cole, join to obtain characters for Carl's novel. The mental anguish she endures over this is offset by the hilarious incidents that occur over misunderstandings. Veteran actor Jack Daly of Redondo Beach plays the sarcastic brother of Rita, Yvonne Benedix of Hawthorne and Ramona Bingham of Redondo play the two sisters who own and operate the lonely hearts club.

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The talented **PHYLLIS HART**, petite pianist and songstress who has returned from vacation will be on hand at the Gala Opening of the newly remodeled and redecorated Cocktail

Lounge and Dining Room at the Half-way House's new piano bar on Wednesday and Thursday, August 7 and 8. She entertains every night, except Mondays.

MARG AND I GO TO CATALINA

Note: this was not meant for publicity for any particular party, or a travelogue for Catalina, but if you are planning a short vacation, away from this area, go to Catalina!

Dateline: Sunday, August 4, 1963

Like most of our plans, it was a last minute decision (not recommended) on Saturday afternoon, to go to Catalina. We did not have reservations (also not recommended) for ship, or hotel at the Island. I started phoning for a room at Avalon (the local agencies are closed on Sat aft of course) a hotel, which I won't mention, and was referred to another number which turned out to be a private room of airline pilots (though a female voice informed me of this?) and, after about 35 minutes and a couple of disconnects, I got the right travel bureau who might possibly help us. It was then I learned of the "Shriners," so I'd better better make sure of passage before I went further. After several more phone calls (and a larger phone bill) we decided to get in the standing line for the 9:45 a.m. Sunday sailing.

We woke up at 8 a.m., the time we planned to be in Wilmington for our trip aboard the S.S. CATALINA STEAMSHIP. It must have been our lucky day, because after arriving, I approached an official looking fellow standing on the floor, with my press card and a parking ticket, who directed us to a window where I bought tickets and we boarded the "Big White Steamship." Heading for the Fan Tail bar for an "eye opener" (Marg changed this idea) I resorted to coffee and donuts from a dispensing machine. Finding a machine that changed halves, quarters and even dollar bills!

Later in the day, I persuaded my B.W. (Beautiful wife) to join me for a vodka and seven, and her usual coke, then took in the show in the ballroom. Starting off with "Cappy" the clown and a lovely miss named Karen Parker, they entertained (mostly for kids) and brought much laughter for all. Later, we enjoyed dance music by "The Shipmates and Ginger" which I label "great." It is their fourth season with the ship. We had a most enjoyable conversation with them after their "break." Lee Roy Morrison, leader of the group, a veteran was once told he would never play another instrument, but worse yet would never walk again. He suffered a broken back with complications during the war. But, making a few scribbles on a piece of paper, he requested a bible. His second note told them they were wrong! A man like this, deserves success!

Now, up on the upper deck we enjoyed the sights going out of the Harbor area, and a very good narrative about the points of interest such as San Pedro's "Port of Call" etc. Meantime, one little 3-year-old was "lost" from her parents, but were readily located by the crew.

After our arrival, at Avalon "Catalina Cappy" joined us at the "Pancake Cottage" for lunch (which he recommended, and so do we), excellent food at reasonable prices! I wish to say that "Cappy" is no ordinary clown. He was once known to many as "GOO-GOO" and for four years at Frank Sennes' Moulin Rouge in Hollywood. Now, known as "Catalina Cappy" he is clown host on the S.S. Catalina every Summer. He is also very personable and popular guy!

Getting back to the Under-sea Garden trip, it was unusual and well narrated by a ship's officer. There is much to see, viewed through the clear, one-inch thick glass-bottom panes, colorful plant life and many type fish, majority of which were the beautiful blue and gold Garibaldi (or goldfish) which, by the way there is a 50.00 fine for catching around Catalina. You will also see Rock Bass, Sea urchin or Porcupine, and abalone (which you may know is gotten by prying loose from the ocean floor) and a big market for same. Passing the

City of Abalone, we saw many Starfish. These "bloodless" fish, if you should cut one in half will have two starfish. There are also the small octopus and eels. The clawless, Western Lobster or Crafish is meaty, (but I still prefer the Eastern variety.) Most of the trip is in shallow water, which is very clear of course. The boat draws four feet of water. One of the most unusual spectacles is performed from the "Davey Jones Locker" where the divers go below your boat and feed the schools of rock bass and mackerel. They, like pets are spoiled as they are fed in this manner about 30 times a day. One of the divers is an attractive girl! There is also a viewable aquarium built upon their "Divers Air



Station," and as a finale of their show, one of the divers stepped aboard our boat with a shark and tickled it's belly to make it flip it's tail, and then holding up two lobsters, he told them if they didn't wave goodbye, they'd be eaten for dinner, so they also waved goodbye, with all tenacles! The boat, though it is a vessel, was christened or chartered as the M.S. PHOENIX (which means motor ship) in 1931, the name was unchanged. I wanted to mention that the water temperature there is 68 deg. in Summer, and a mere 55 deg. in the Winter months.



On two occasions, we noted a crowd in the street, they were gathered around the music of traveling troubadours called, "Los Camperos" dressed in colorful blue and white garb with white boots, and consisting of guitars, mandolins, violins and trumpets, skillfully playing and singing Mexican folk music.

One of my pleasures aboard the return trip in the Ballroom, while I sent Marg to pick up our photo, taken aboard (cost for 5x7 is \$1.56), and worth it (if you're photogenic) was to request Lee Roy to play the Hawaiian Wedding Song and have my wife sing it. So giving them her key, on her return she was introduced and surprised! Being a good sport, she followed through beautifully, proving to her she can sing with a band as well as piano and organ. She was asked to sing again next time aboard.

But, all in all it is a very worthwhile trip. The ride on the Big White Steamship alone is worth it. (My apologies to the other modes of transportation, which I'm sure are very enjoyable, though we have not yet experienced them). As we wound up our trip and my story on the upper deck, and seeing the home lights, it is quite breezy, and I am hoping the T-Bird is ready to take us home quickly to Lomita, where we can put our tired bodies into bed.



The fabulous "SHIPMATES", versatile group who play aboard the S.S. Catalina in the "Casino Ballroom" their fourth Summer season, in the manner that has made them famous. L to R:

Art Maryland, Al Mitchell, Lee Roy Morrison, leader and Johnny Creach. Vocalist and violinist "Ginger" not shown, also appears with them.



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